

A woman of Dignity

Carol: Every day, we women take great care when we get dressed. We make sure we have on nice clean clothes - clothes that match...and the colors we think that look good on us. Today, I put on dark pants, with a pretty floral blouse and a pink cardigan.

Tammy: ...And you sure *do* look pretty today Carol...but you *always* look pretty!

Carol: Aw, Thanks Tammy...and so do you! But, you know, today as I dressed myself and looked in the mirror, I thought – ‘Yes, my clothes *do* look nice. But what if I had a mirror that showed the inside of me – my character – I wonder! Would that look nice too?’

Tammy: Welcome to Women of Hope! You can probably almost see Carol today because you know what she’s wearing. And she has pretty hair that’s just turning grey. It’s not straight but wavy, and comes down to her shoulders.

Carol: And Tammy’s wearing dark pants too – with a bright stripey kind of shirt. She has lovely short hair that’s also turning grey – but her hair is straight and nicely cut into a short style. Now, can you see her too?

Tammy: Now you must be thinking that this is a day for compliments! What’s so special about today?

Carol: Well Tammy and I were talking the other day about how every day is special in some way. There never was one like it in the past – and there never will be again in the future. So let’s make the most of today. And today, we’re going to talk about what kind of woman we are...and are we living each ‘special’ day for the best?

Tammy: Mmm...that *will* be interesting. While you get comfortable, wherever you are, let’s start today with some ‘pretty’ music! Music always makes me feel comfortable – as long as it’s music that I like! I hope you like it too.

Carol: I hope you enjoyed that as much as I did! Okay, Are you comfortable? Now where were we? Yes, of course we’re going to talk about...fashion!

Tammy: *Fashion??*

Carol: That's right – *fashion*...a little later, *Marli* is going to come and talk about fashion for our souls!

Tammy: You're full of surprises today Carol. I'll look forward to hearing what our friend Marli has to say later.

Now you said we were going to talk about what kind of woman we are...so where will we start?

Carol: Well Tammy, I've been thinking about this – and I've decided that there are at least four different kinds of women. You can tell what they're like *inside* if you listen – you just have to listen to the words that come out of their mouths.

So here's the first...the *Scheming Woman*. This woman is filled with bitter words and selfish actions. She loves to gossip about others, and tell stories about them that are not true. She envies those around her and criticizes them. She's determined to stir up trouble. One day she may act like your *friend* and the next day she's your *enemy*...you discover that your *friend* has said some things that are not true about you. Be careful of this woman.

Tammy: Well...she doesn't sound very nice to me. I hope I'm not like her! And I don't think I want a *friend* like her either. And the next woman?...

Carol: She's the *Complaining Woman*. She complains about everything and everyone. Her conversations are filled with curses. She's bad-tempered, and wants others to join her and...ruin their lives too. Do you know someone like this?

Tammy: Well I can think of someone who complains all the time – about everything. How about you...does someone you know come into your mind? Do you like being with that person?

Carol: Next, we have the *Self-controlled Woman*. This woman *thinks* before she speaks. She knows when to be silent. She gives wise advice. She is considerate and not rude. People like to be with her and she makes them feel comfortable.

Tammy: Aaah – that's better...yes I can think of people like that, and I really like being with them.

Carol: So do I. And lastly, there's the *Caring Woman*...quite opposite to the *Care-less Woman*. This woman can be honest and speak truthfully and yet be encouraging at the same time. She is kind to others and sincere love flows from her conversations. People love to be around her. Do you know someone like this? She is *also* a good friend to have.

Tammy: Oh yes, I can think of someone like that. This is the person I want to be most like. What about you?

If you could look in the mirror and see not just what you look like, but what you're like on the inside – would you like what you see? What do other people see . . . and what do they hear when you speak?

Isn't it good to be together today on Women of Hope!? We're talking about how we present ourselves. And women often love to dress up in pretty clothes, don't we!

Carol: We do – but today we're talking about not just what we see in the mirror as we dress ourselves, but what we might look like if we could see the inside – our hearts – as well as the outside.

Tammy: You're so right Carol when you say that what comes out of our mouths shows us what's in our hearts. And do you know that what we say is probably going to have the biggest influence on our families. Haven't you heard your own words come back to you as you've heard your child speak – especially when they were little?

Carol: And if you're not a parent yet, I'm sure *you've* heard little children speak just like their parents. You remember our friend Ros, who visits with us sometimes? She told me a cute story...

She was digging in the garden and her youngest grandchild, Olivia, was helping. As they were digging and pulling weeds they saw a big, fat worm wriggle up out of the ground.

"Ew – that's *disgusting*," said Olivia, as she screwed up her face, "worms are *disgusting*!"

Now, Ros looked at her daughter in law and with a laugh said, "It's *your* fault. Just because you don't like worms, you've taught her that they're disgusting!" And they all laughed together.

It took Ros a while to explain to Olivia that worms are very special – and they have a special job to do to dig in the ground. They make the soil just right for the plants to grow. Olivia's mother joined in and helped to explain that worms really *are* very important and special.

Tammy: Oh that is a cute story.

Carol: Ros said that the next day, when Olivia went to her exercise class, the theme for the day was *worms* – they had to wriggle through a tunnel like a worm and wriggle across the floor like a worm. At the end of the session she had a little picture of a worm stamped on one hand and one foot. She proudly showed them to Ros, her Gran, as she told her that worms are good!! She even cried that night when the pictures were washed off in the bath!

Tammy: So – your attitude to life – and what you say, is certainly passed on to your children.

But more seriously, mother - what do *your* children hear? Do they hear you *scheming* and speaking bitter words and criticizing others?

Do they hear your *complaining* heart – as you say unkind, and untrue things about others? Do they hear you complaining about everything?

Or do they hear the words of a *self-controlled* woman – with considerate words and wise advice?

And what about the woman who is *caring* in what she says...do they hear her? Do they hear honest words of love and encouragement?

Whatever they hear, you can be sure they will say similar words – if not the same. Do they see your inner strength and hear words of dignity and truth?

Do people want to spend time with you? ...Then they will want to spend time with your daughters too. And as they grow into mature women it will delight your heart as you see them care for their *own* families with encouraging and loving words.

Carol: So as you look into the mirror of your heart, what do you see? And what do others hear?

Tammy: Yes, our sons need to hear kind words from their mothers – so that they can look for these encouraging words in a future wife.

And as our daughters see us showing this inner strength and dignity that we've been talking about, *they* are very likely to grow and mature into women with those very same qualities. And they will pass these on to their daughters too.

Carol: The way we speak to those around us will have an effect for a long time. Our position as a woman – as a mother, an aunt, a grandmother is one that will help to shape the lives of future generations.

So, look into the mirror of your heart today and see – what kind of woman are you?

Here on Women of Hope – as we promised, we have our friend Marli...welcome Marli.

Marli: Thank you. You know how much I love being here with you...and my, don't you look lovely in that pretty pink cardigan Carol. It suits you.

Carol: Thank you Marli. ...And *you* sure look beautiful too. Tell our friend what you're wearing today.

Marli: I'm wearing a floral skirt, and a lime green jacket. And of course I have a matching scarf around my neck – I love wearing a scarf, do *you*?

Tammy: Friend, we wish we could see *you* – I'm sure you look beautiful today too. Now it's time to make yourself *really* comfortable as you listen to Marli.

Marli: Hello my friend, and welcome to our *fashion show*. Fashion for our souls that is! We've been talking about clothing ourselves with inner strength and dignity. You see, the price we pay for our clothes, or the shape of our bodies is not *really* what makes us beautiful. The way we speak and act toward others is where the beauty comes alive.

Today we want to look closely at this garment called dignity. What is dignity? Dignity is the way we show our *inner strength*. The word dignity means: being worthy of honour or respect. It means being self-controlled, and respecting your *self* too.

Some time ago I visited a friend at the hospital. Her husband was dying with a terminal disease. She had been taking care of him for more than 2 years at home and now they were in the hospital all the time. They could not leave the hospital.

I had not seen her for a while. I knew that she'd been at his bedside day and night for weeks and I thought I would find her very depressed. So I was not expecting to see what I saw. Yes, she had lost weight. A lot of weight. The dark circles around her eyes told me that this was a *very* difficult time. She was wearing a very smart dress, and her hair was done beautifully, as usual. What I noticed most was her words. She is a shy and softly spoken woman, but I saw incredible strength at work in her life. This was truly God's inner strength shown at a time of human weakness.

As I was leaving, I said to her, "Thanks for showing me how you can be so strong and how you can still live with so much grace and dignity, my friend." She hugged me and said, 'Marli, I am just a little woman. Jesus is the one who makes me strong.' Yes, there she was, in the darkest hour of her life and she was not cursing, blaming God or rebelling against him. She had God's arms of love around her. She was simply wrapped in *His strength* and *dignity*.

Now God's word, the Bible describes the clothing that a virtuous, clean living woman wears. It says: "Strength and dignity is her clothing, and she smiles at the future!" We have already talked about how we can be clothed with inner strength. We can only do this as we trust God and study His Word. We need to commit our lives to Him day by day and spend time with Him in prayer.

You see, dignity begins in the heart. When we give our hearts and lives over completely to God, we can show dignity. Our behaviour changes when we live our lives based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and His Word, the Bible. Whatever we do then, no matter what hard times we are facing in life, we will show this kind of dignity in all we do and say.

Another way we dress ourselves with dignity is when we are self-controlled ...remember? And so we are not controlled by our emotions. We women are emotional people aren't we! This is the way God made us...with emotions that influence our behaviour. There's nothing wrong with that, but we have to keep our minds focussed on what is good, and what is right, and not let our emotions take us over!

I think we all get upset with our children, our husband, or our mother-in-law at times. How do *you* react when you're upset? When you see that your friend has a better house, or better behaved children than you? Or even when your husband is unfaithful to you. Of course you feel hurt and upset and you want to do something about it. Instead of figuring out how to overcome this problem in your life, maybe you would do what most of us do...and what's that? ...We start talking. We complain and we say things that we will regret later.

In God's word, in Proverbs (12:18) it says, "Reckless words pierce like a sword." Yes, words said in anger can hurt very badly. Oh, let's be careful! If we're upset with our child, we should never say to her, "I hate you! You are nothing!" or "I wish you were never born!" These are very hurtful words. Your child will never forget them...these are words that you can never take back. A woman dressed with dignity does not curse, does not have a foul mouth, and does not talk behind someone's back. Remember, we can control our tongue only if we're not controlled by our emotions.

Another way we can be dressed with dignity is to be discrete...showing decency and modesty. Many women have lost their sense of decency and modesty. The film industry and the media have brought immoral and indecent things into our homes. On TV we see a lot of wrong behaviour – especially between men and women. If we accept these things into our home we are like the woman who is described in Proverbs (11:12) It says: "Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion." This is a very strong statement, isn't it? But it's true. In a pig's snout would not be a nice place to be – and it's not where a gold ring belongs...in the filth and muck that a pig puts its snout into.

Oh, we must teach our daughters and granddaughters how to live with good and decent morals...living a clean life. As Christian women we are daughters of the King of Kings and we should show this dignity in our lives. But remember, as we said before, we can only be dressed in this dignity

and inner strength when we are trusting in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and following His Word, the Bible.

So let's be clothed with strength and dignity, so that we can fulfill our purpose on earth - to glorify our God and Father who loves us as His precious daughters.

Would you like to pray with me now, my friend?

Dear Father God, we come to you to ask for these beautiful garments of the soul. Please give us a heart that wants to live to please you. Help us to control our tongues and not be controlled by our emotions. And God, help us not to take on the indecency and impurity that the world presses upon us and our daughters. May we bring glory to you as we live in your strength - with dignity in our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Tammy: Thank you for joining us today Marli. It's always good to have you back to share these truths about God and how he wants us to live.

Carol: That's all we have time for today. I hope you've enjoyed it as much as we have. And have you decided...what kind of woman are you? What kind would you like to be?

If you would like to share something that's happening in your life, or if you would like us to pray for you, we would love to hear from you. You can contact us at... this station or at Women of Hope

Tammy: The email address is TWRWomenofHope@TWR.org. That's TWRWomenofHope@TWR.org. Or if you have missed a program or you want to hear it again visit our website TWRWomenofHope.org. or by visit our Facebook page.

Carol: Have a great week filled with God's blessings.

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